THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

Public Information Department, 11150 East Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340

PRESS RELEASE

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Photograph acquisitions on first-time view at Art Museum Through May 14, 1989

The Cleveland Museum of Art added ninety-five works to its growing collection of 19th- and 20th-century photographs during 1988. These twenty-eight purchases and sixty-seven gifts are too great a number to include in the Museum's annual **Year in Review** exhibition. Their importance and quality, however, demanded that a selection be exhibited during the **Year in Review**, through May 14. Nineteenth- and early-20th-century works are on view in Gallery D; more recent 20th-century works are in Gallery 39.

Recently, the Museum has increased its commitment to photography not only through ongoing special exhibitions but by vigorously seeking early, important examples of camera work, mainly by British, French, and American photographers, to become the cornerstone of its collection. Among artists new to the Museum's collection this year are Carleton E. Watkins, Henry Peach Robinson, and the little-known William H. Rau. Watkins was one of the most important photographers of the American West, whose mammoth (approximately 20x24") contact print of the Sierra Nevadas (ca. 1866-70) is included in the exhibition. Robinson was a British pictorialist whose belief that the young art of photography deserved status equal to other graphic arts led him to make such carefully conceived and posed images as the Museum's scene from his famous "Little Red Riding Hood" series (1858). Rau was one of many who photographed scenery along the burgeoning railroads--in this case, to promote the Lehigh Valley line, a view of Bear Lake (ca. 1898-99) with a wide range of textures and tones and the ever-present railroad right-of-way a strong diagonal element in Rau's thoughtful

composition. A smoky view of a Cleveland canal by Grancel Fitz (1920s) has been added to the Museum's sizable group of early-20th-century Cleveland photographs. Curator of Contemporary Art Tom Hinson emphasizes fine condition as well as aesthetic achievement when selecting early photographs for the collection, so that even such old images as an anonymous albumen print of an ivy-covered English castle from 1858 have a startling freshness.

Photographs from the 1950s through 1980s in the exhibition include Oil Refinery, Tema, Ghana, from one of two Paul Strand portfolios added to the Museum's strong group of rare, vintage Strand pictures; combination prints by Jerry Uelsmann, including the early Symbolic Mutation, melding images of a woman's face and a fist; a complex picture of Fifth Avenue windows and reflections by Lisette Model; arresting portraits of Carl Sandburg by Arnold Newman and of J. Robert Oppenheimer by Phillipe Halsman; and Andrew Borowiec's Residential Street Mingo Junction, Ohio, purchased from the Museum's 1988 **May Show**.

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For more information or photographs, please contact Denise Horstman, Public Information, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.